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ABSTRACT

Across the nation, about 16,000 school boards are responsible for selecting their chief school administrators, including the superintendent. To aid school boards with their selection process, this paper provides some helpful hints. First, boards need to establish goals, philosophy, and school district needs and determine all possible alternatives for finding a school superintendent. The job description should provide candidates with basic information about the school district, salary range, and responsibilities. Current trends concerning educational, work, and task requirements are summarized. To advertise the position, boards can use several national publications and should simplify the application process. Next, a key person should be chosen to screen applications, once clear-cut procedures and a rating sheet have been developed. Before candidates are interviewed, a list of questions should be developed that tests candidates' familiarity with superintendent responsibilities and elicits information about their personal background and motivation for considering the position. The last step is selecting a person of superior professional caliber and communicating contract terms and conditions. The discussion is supported by two appendices (a comparative rating sheet and a list of state departments of education) and nine references. (MLH)

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ED277120

A HANDBOOK FOR THE

SCHOOL BOARDS IN AMERICA

FOR THE SELECTION OF THE

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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EA 019 035

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A Handbook For the

SCHOOL BOARDS IN AMERICA

For the Selection of The

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Introduction

There are about 16,000 school boards in the nation.[1] Every year 19-33 percent, that is nearly 3,000 - 5,000 school boards are involved in the selection of thrir chief school officers.[2] Each board has about 5-13 members. About 15,000 - 55,000 board members are thus involved every year with the selection of the superintendent of schools. Additionally, many boards involves many other key people in the selection of the superintendents. These key people may give their feedback and impressions about the candidates but the final decision must be made by the board of education.

Members of the board of education comes from various walks of life - educators and non-educators. Some have experience and or professional skills in the selection of a school superintendent, others do not. They are responsible and have the authority to make policies for their school districts. To implement their policies and manage the school district, they employ a chief school administrator. Because

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[1]National Center for Education Statistics Education Directory U.S. Department of Education, Washington D.C., 1980.

[2]Richard H, Barr, Education Program Officer, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Assistant Secretary, Washington, D.C. 20202, Personal Correspondence, October 7, 1980.

the person they hire would be responsible to carry out their policies and the success of the school district, the selection of the superintendent is a very important task of every board. Superintendents makes the difference. The selection of the superintendent has a bearing on the education and overall success of the district. An effective selection may bring effective schooling for the students and organizational success.

Poor selection can have detrimental effect on the education of the students, educational programs, and organizational task accomplishment. Again generally speaking a poor selection may also lead to low staff-student-community morale, poor organizational climate, poor schooling for the students, and even organizational failure.

Helpful Hints

The following hints may help a board of education in their search for an effective superintendent:

1. Goals Establish philosophy, goals and objectives, and needs of your school district. If you already have established the same in the past, review the same and find out the changes needed, if any.

2. Alternatives Dtermine all the possible alternatives to find the school superintendent, e.g. from: (1) within the school district, (2) from within the state, and (3) from all over the nation. The needs of your school district would be helpful to decide on the best alternative.

3. Job Description Develop and provide the candidates with the following information about your school district:

i. Enrollment in the school district

ii. Type of school district i.e. elementary, secondary, K-12, details of other programs

iii. Number of various type of schools and staff in the central office

iv. Number of certified and non-certified staff

v. Closing date for the receipt of applications

vi. Salary range

vii. Joining date

viii. Description of the community

Develop a job description to meet the specific needs of your school district. It would help make an effective selection. The current trend in the job description of the superintendents is given below and should be of help to you in the development of the job description. If you already have one developed, review the same, and make the necessary changes needed, if any.

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The current trend in the educational requirements for the selection of the superintendents in the nation is given on the next page.[3]

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[3]Krishan Chand The Current Trend of the Job Description of School Superintendents in the United States ERIC Document Reproduction Service, U.S. Department of Education, ED 239 364, 1983.

TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Education	Frequency	Percent
Doctorate	287	27.9
6th year, M.A.+30 credits	31	3.0
Master's	88	8.6
Certification	692	67.2
Did not mention any	47	4.6
Total	1145[a]	111.3

n= 1030

[a]This total frequency and percent exceeds the number n and the 100% as some of the school boards wrote more than one requirement.
This reference applies to all the tables 1-3.

About one-fourth (27.9%) of the school boards advertised that they would prefer a candidate with an earned doctorate compare to 30% of the superintendents who presently hold a doctoral degree;[4] a few (3%) required a candidate to have 6th year, M.A. + 30 credits or more credits; 8.6% requires a candidate to have a Master's degree; 67.2% stated in the job description that the candidate meet the certification requirements;[5] and 4.6% did not mention any requirements in their advertisement.

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[4]Krishan Chand, "Job Satisfaction of Superintendents in the United States" (Ed.D. Dissertation, New York University, 1982), p. 34.

[5]Certification requirements vary from state to state but in general these appears to include a master's degree and a number of years of teaching and administrative experience.
This reference applies to all the tables 1-3.

WORK EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS

The current trend in the work experience requirements for the selection of the superintendents in the nation is given below:[6]

TABLE 2

DISTRIBUTION OF WORK EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS

Experience	Frequency	Percent
Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent/Central office	260	25.2
Administration/Management/ Leadership	362	35.1
Administration/teaching (5 years or less)	117	11.4
Certification	692	67.2
Did not mention any	47	4.6
Total	1514	147.0

n= 1030

About one-fourth (25.2%) of the school boards required a candidate to have an experience as superintendent/ assistant superintendent and or in the central office; 35.1% required the candidate to have administrative/ management/and or leadership skills and experience; 11.4% required the candidate to have 5 years or lesser administrative and teaching experience; 3.5% required the candidate to have 6-10 years of administrative and teaching experience; 67.2% stated in the job description that the candidate

[6]Chand, The Current Trend of the Job Description of School superintendents in the united states, pp. 8-9.

meet the certification requirements; and 4.6% did not mention any requirement in their advertisements.

TASKS REQUIREMENTS

The current trend in the tasks requirements for the selection of the superintendents in the nation is given below:[7]

TABLE 3

DISTRIBUTION OF TASKS REQUIREMENTS

Tasks	Frequency	Percent
Curriculum	106	10.3
School Finance	106	10.3
Community, staff, board, public relations	89	8.7
Collective bargaining	39	3.8
Bilingual/cross-cultural education	30	2.9
Communication skills	30	2.9
Personnel Management	26	2.5
Planning	16	1.6
Ability to delegate	16	1.6
School laws	12	1.1
Problem solver	5	0.5
Facilities Management	5	0.5
Affirmative action	4	0.4
Deseggration	2	0.2
Accessing future needs	2	0.2
Political astuteness	2	0.2
Student achievement	2	0.2

[7] Ibid. pp 9-11

Maintain an open climate	2	0.2
Expect excellence	2	0.2
Dedicated to extra curricular activities	2	0.2
Use of computers	2	0.2
Modern management techniques	2	0.2
Certification	692	67.2
Did not mention any	47	4.6
Total	1245	120.7

n = 1030

About 10% of the school boards required a candidate to have skills/experience in curricular development and improvement; an equal number required the candidates to have skills/experience in school finance; 8.7% needed candidates with a professional background/experience in public, community, board, staff, student relations; 3.8% required the candidates to have professional backgorund in collective bargaining; 2.9% school boards required the candidates to have professional background in bilingual/cross-cultural education; an equal number required the candidates to have good written and oral communication skills; 1.6% needed the candidates to have skills in long and short range planning; an equal number required the candidates to have the ability to delegate; 1.1% school boards required the candidates to have knowledge of the school laws; 3.2% of the school boards required the candidates to have professional capabilities in problem solving, facilities management, affirmative action, deseggragation, accessing future needs, political astuteness,

student achievement, maintaining an open climate; expecting an excellence from self, staff, and students; extra curricular activities, use of computers, and modern management techniques; 67.2% stated that the candidates meet the certification requirements; and 4.6% did not mention any requirement.

4. Advertise the position There are several sources that publish superintendency positions. Some of these are: American Association of School Administrators,[8] National Association of School Boards,[9] and New York Times.[10] They all publish the positions on a nationwide basis. There are ofcourse other sources which provide information about the positions. Sources number 8 and 9 announce the vacancies free of charge. Ask the candidates to supply the information about the items that you later on intend to evaluate/screen the candidates for.

Keep your job description/brochure, application form (if any), cover leter, and any other appropriate material ready, so that you may respond to the responses to your advertisements/announcements quickly. Boards have received enquirees ranging from 30-400 for every available superintendency position. Many boards are simply asking the candidates to send their resume, state certification (or proof of eligibility),

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[8]The American Association of School Administrators Job Bulletin (Virginia: American Association of School Administrators) published every six-week intervals for its members.

[9]National School Boards Association The Executive Educator and Career (Washington D.C.: National School Boards Association) published every month.

[10]New York Times The Week in Review (N.Y.: New York Times) publishes careers in education every week.

copies of transcripts, and other appropriate material of their choice. Simple application procedures might result in receiving more applilcations and are also probably easier to evaluate. Acknowledge the receipt of the applications to all the candidates. Inform them of the status of their applications, whether it is complete or you need any other information/material from them.

5. Review the applictions Decide the key persons to be involved in the screeing of applications. Determine screening procedures and develop a standard rating sheet. An example of the rating sheet is given in Appendix I. Select the applicants that you want to interview personally. Contact the candidates selected for interview by written/telephone communication and confirm the appointment for a personal interview. Make sure that the candidates you selected for the interview have the required administrative certificate from your state or are eligible for one. Your state department of education will be able to give you the details about the requirements for certification. Addresses of the state departments of education are given in Appendix II. Confirm the time, date, day, and place of interview. Answer the questions if any the candidates have about the selection procedure. Inform the candidates not selected for the interview about the status of their applications.

6. Interview the candidates Prepare well for the interview as it is one of the most important tasks concerning the selection of an effective chief school administrator. Be sure that all the board members and other key persons if any

you want to involve in the interview process can attend interviews of all the candidates. Allow enough time for conducting the interviews. Most of the districts appears to be paying the candidates for their expenses on travel, lodging, meals etc. Make a list of the important questions you intend to ask the candidates. If your district is facing some crucial areas of concerns, then specific questions should be asked on that area in detail. Some of the suggested helpful questins are:

BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP

* What strategies would you use to develop working relationship with the board?
* What kind of working relationship dc you expect between the board of education and yourself?
* What specific experience and or professional skills you have in building a good working relationship with the board?
* Have you published any article/study on board-superintendent relationship? If yes, describe the publication in brief.
* What is your concept of the role of the superintendent related to a school board meeting in the district?
* Suppose the board establishes a policy to which you completely oppose, what would you do?
* How would you work, or have worked with the school board on building an agenda for the board meeting?
* What approach would you use, or have used to communicate with the board?
* How the superintendent should be evaluated?
* How would you inform the board about the needs and conditions of the district?

SUPERINTENDENT-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP

* What strategies would you use to develop working relationship with the community?
* How would you inform the public of the district's activities and involve the citizens?
* What kind of working relationship do you expect between yourself and the community?
* What specific experience and or professional skills you have in building a good working relationship with the community?
* Have you published any article/study on superintendent-community relationship? If so, in what way, do you think that your study may help you as a superintendent in this district?
* What is your experience in dealing with the media? How would you deal?
* How would you improve the image of the school system in the community?
* In the total picture, where does the superintendent fit into the community relations?
* If a parent reports to you that his/her child has been unfairly given lower grades/scores in one of your schools, what would you do?
* Would you participate in the cultural activities of the community? If yes, how and in what kind?

SUPERINTENDENT-STAFF RELATIONSHIP

* What strategies would you use to develop working relationship with the staff?
* Have you published any article/study on superintendent-staff relationship? If yes, describe the publication in brief.

* How the key personnel be selected and evaluated?
* How would you help the staff in the improvement of their professional abilities?
* How would you communicate board policy and programs to staff?
* How would you motivate and lead the professional staff?
* How would you extend your influence throughout the school system and direct the staff toward desirable educational goals?
* How would you delegate authority, responsibility, and supervise the staff?
* How would you utilize the staff in the continuing evaluation and development of the instructional programs and planned change?
* What will you doto dismiss a staff member?

CURRICULUM

* What has been your experience in working with the curriculum?
* In your opinion, does the extra curricular program fit into the regular educational program? If yes, how?
* How would you provide the special services? Vocational?
* How would you develop and improve the instructional program in this district?
* How would you evaluate the educdational programs?
* How would you lead the staff in meeting the educational objectives of the district?
* How would you coordinate curriculum activities and text book selection?
* How would you interpret the curriculum and proposed changes if any to the staff, public, and board?

* How would you plan the staff development activities? Suppose an employee does not improve in performance, even after all of your administrative support, what will you do?
* What experience you have in multicultural/multilingual education?

FINANCE

* What has been your experience in working with school finance at the district level?
* How would you prepare and administer the budget?
* How would you work or have worked with the school board on financial planning and budget development?
* How would you interpret the financial concerns of the district to the community?
* How would you secure, allocate, and manage fiscal resources?
* How would you manage the expenditures?
* What experience you have in promoting district's financial needs at the state level?
* What professional skills you have in inventory control, purchasing, and accounting?
* What experience you have in managing of district's real estate and insurance programs?
* How would you develop a program of budget forecasting and control?

PERSONAL

* What kind of salary do you expect?
* Why are you applying for this position?
* Why do you want to leave your current position?
* What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
* Why do you want to relocate to this city?

* What are your professional goals?
* What are your hobbies and interests?
* How does your wife and family deals with your busy administrative life?
* What activities you have in mind for your own professional growth?
* If you were to choose a career again, would you choose teaching?

AUXILARY-ADMINISTRATIVE

* What experience you have in tgransportation services of schools?
* What experience you have in food services programs in schools?
* What professional skills you have in school laws?
* What experience you have in collective bargaining and contract administration?
* How would you develop and carry out short range and long range plans in the district?
* How would you access the future needs?
* How would you gain support from voters for levies and bond issues?
* What is your experience in dealing with affirmative action and desegration?
* The district's major concerns/problems are ... ... How would you deal with each of these?
* How do you solve your major administrative problems?

CHANGING EMPLOYMENT

* How much time would you need to notify your current employer before assuming resoponsibilities with this district if hired?

* If we check your background and references what do you think we will find?
* How many hours a week do you think you would spend on this job?
* What factors would make you leave the job and look for a position elsewhere?
* If we employed you, how long would you stay with us?
* Don't you feel you might be better off in a larger/smaller/different school district?
* Does your current employer know you are out looking for a job?
* Why have you changed your job so many times?
* What kind of support you would expect from the school board?
* What would be the effect of your accepting this position on your family and how would they deal with the same in your opinion?

MISCELLANEOUS

* Tell us in brief about yourself and why should we hire you?
* What is your philosophy of education?
* How would you work with the ohter officials in the area both elected and appointed?
* How would you improve student achievement?
* How would you improve drop out rate?
* How would you motivate students for their future education?
* What is the most difficult question I could ask you and then answer it?
* Describe your major accomplishments?
* Describe your major source of satisfaction on work.

* What are some of the good and bad comments people made of you?
* Tell us some of the challenges you think you would face on this position and how would you deal with that?
* What do you know about our school district?
* What can you do for us that someone else would not do as well?
* Can you work under pressure and meet the deadlines?
* What do you consider your major strengths and weaknesses in administration?

7. Make a Selection Make a final selection. Person with a superior professional background should be selected as a superintendent.[11] Offer the job by telephone and in writing to the person selected. The contract should be accepted by both the superintendent and the board. The contract should contain all the terms and conditions of employment including the procedures for evaluation[12] and contract renewal.

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[11]Krishan Chand Eductional Improvement in the U.S. ERIC Document Reproduction Service, U.S. Department of Education, ED 268 629, 1984.

[12]Krishan Chand Evaluation of Superintendents ERIC Document Reproduction Service, U.S. Department of Education, ED 245 341, 1984.

Appendix I
(An Example of Comparative Rating Sheet)

Particulars / Names of Applicants															
Educational Requirements	If yes, check (✓) next to each item, if no, leave blank														
Doctor's Degree															
Major															
6th Year															
Major															
M.S./M.Ed./M.A.															
Major															
B.S./B.A.															
Major															
Other Degrees (if any)															
Major(s)															
Certificates	If yes,check (✓) next to each item, if no, leave blank														
Teaching in this State															
Adm. in this state															
Supt. in this state															
Teaching in other state															
Adm. in other state															
Supt. in other state															
Eligible for supt. in this state															
Work Experience Requirements	Years of experience														
Experience as Teacher															
Experience as Adm. C.O., principal etc															
Experience as Supt.															
Total experience Teacher/Administrator															
Tasks Requirements	Number of Graduate Credits/Number of Publications														
Curriculum															
Publications on Curriculum															
Finance															
Publications on Finance															
Board-Supt. Relations															
Publications															
Supt.-Community Relations															
Publications															
Supt.-Staff Relations															
Publications															

Appendix I - Continued

Collective Bargaining															
Publications															
Cross-cultural Education															
Publications															
Others (*)															

* Add other items as per need/concerns of your school district

Appendix II

LIST OF STATE DEPARATMENT OF EDUCDATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

ALABAMA

Department of Education
483 State Office Building
501 Dexter Avenue
Montgomery, Al 36130
(205) 832-3316

ALASKA

Department of Education
State Office Building
Pouch F
Juneau, Ak 99811
(907) 465-2800

ARIZONA

State Department of Education
1535 W. Jefferson Street
Phoenix, AZ 85007
(602) 255-4361

ARKANSAS

State Department of Education
Arch Ford Education Buldg
Capitol Mall
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 371-1464

CALIFORNIA

State Department of Education
721 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 445-4338

COLORADO

Department of Education
523 State Office Building
201 E. Colfax Aveune
Denver, CO 80203
(303) 866-2212

CONNECTICUT

Deprtment of Education
305 State Office Building
165 Capitol Avenue
P.O. Box 2219
Hartford, CT 06106
(203) 566-5061

DELAWARE

Department of Public Instruction
Townsend Bldg.
P.O. Box 1402
Dover, DE 19901
(302) 736-4601

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Superintendnt of Schools
D.C. Public Schools
1209 Presidential Bldg.
415 12th St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20004
(202) 724-4222

FLORIDA

Department of Education
The Capitol, Plaza Level 08
Tallahassee, FL 32301
(904) 487-1785

GEORGIA

Department of Education
Twin Towers East, 20th Fl.
Atlanta, GA 30334
(404) 656-2800

HAWAII

Department of Education
Queen Liliuokalani Bldg.
1390 Miller St.
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu, HI 96804
(808) 548-6405

IDAHO

Department of Education
Len B. Jordan Bldg.
650 W. State St.
Boise, ID 83720
(208) 334-3301

ILLINOIS

State Board of Education
100 N. 1st St.
Springfield, IL 62777
(217) 782-2221

Appendix II - Continued

INDIANA

Department of Public Instruction
229 State House
200 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 232-6610

IOWA

Department of Public Instruction
Grimes State Office Bldg.
400 E. 14th St.
Des Moines, IA 50319
(913) 296-3201

KENTUCKY

Department of Education
Education & Humanities Cabinet
Capital Plaza Tower, 17th Fl.
Frankfort, KY 40601
(502) 564-4770

LOUISIANA

Department of Education
Education Building
626 N. 4th St.
P.O. Box 44064
Baton Rouge, LA 70804
(504) 342-3602

MAINE

Department of Educational &
Cultural Services
State House, Station 23
Augusta, ME 04333
(207) 289-2321

MARYLAND

State Superintendent of Schools
Department of Education
200 W. Baltimore St.
Baltimore, MD 21201
(301) 659-2100

MASSACHUSETTS

Department of Education
1385 Hancock St.
Quincy, MA 02169
(617) 770-7517

MICHIGAN

Department of Education
Michigan National Tower
124 W. Allegan St.
P.O. Box 30008
Lansing, MI 48909
(517) 373-3354

MINNESOTA

Department of Education
Capitol Square Bldg.
550 Cedar St.
St. Paul, MN 55101
(612) 296-2358

MISSOURI

Department of Elementary & Secondary
Education
100 E. Capitol Ave.
P.O. Box 480
Jefferson City, MO 65102
(314) 751-4446

MONTANA

Office of Public Instruction
106 Capitol Bldg.
Helena, MT 59620
(406) 449-3654

NEBRASKA

Department of Education
State Office Building
301 Centennial Mall, S.
P.O. Box 94987
Lincoln, NE 68509
(402) 471-2465

NEVADA

Department of Education
Capitol Complex
Carson City, NV 89710
(702) 885-3100

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Office of Teacher Education &
Professional Standards
101 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301
(603) 271-3144

Appendix II - Continued

NEW JERSEY

Office of Teacher Certification
State of New Jersey
3535 Quakerbridge Road - CN 503
Trenton, NJ 08625- 0503
(609) 292-4477

NEW MEXICO

Department of Education
Education Building
300 Don Gaspar Ave.
Santa Fe, NM 87503
(505) 827-2282

NEW YORK

State Education Department
State Education Building
Albany, NY 12234
(518) 474-4688

NORTH CAROLINA

Department of Public Education
Education Building
Salisbury and Edenton Sts.
Raleigh, NC 27611
(919) 733-3813

NORTH DAKOTA

Department of Public Instruction
State Capitol
Bismarck, ND 58505-0164
(701) 224-2261

OHIO

Department of Education
808 Ohio Department Bldg.
65 S. Front St.
Columbus, OH 43215
(614) 466-3304

OKLAHOMA

Department of Education
2500 N. Lincoln Blvd.
Oklahoma City, OK 73105
(405) 521-3301

OREGON

State Department of Education
700 Pringle Parkway, S.E.
Salem, OR 97310
(503) 378-3573

PENNSYLVANIA

Department of Education
333 Market St.
P.O. Box 911
Harrisburg, PA 17108
(717) 787-2967

RHODE ISLAND

State Department of Education
22 Hayes St.
Providence, RI 02908
(401) 277-2031

SOUTH CAROLINA

State Department of Education
1006 Rutledge Bldg.
1429 Senate St.
Columbia, SC 29201
(803) 758-3291

SOUTH DAKOTA

Department of Education
Richard F. Kneip Bldg.
700 N. Illinois St.
Pierre, SD 57501
(605) 773-3243

TENNESSEE

State Department of Education
100 Cordell Hull Bldg.
436 6th Ave., N.
Nashville, TN 37219
(615) 741-2731

TEXAS

Texas Education Agency
State of Texas
201 E. 11th St.
Austin, TX 78701
(512) 475-3271

Appendix II - Continued

UTAH

State Office of Education
250 E. 5th South St.
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
(801) 533-5431

VERMONT

Department of Education
State Office Building
120 State St.
Montpelier, VT 05602
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Department of Education
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